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LIBERTY

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

A History Of
The Village
Of Liberty,
County of
Adams,
Illinois

QUINCY

SPRINGFIELD

NNIBAL

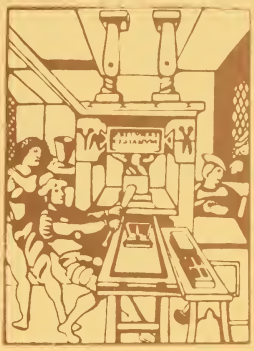
From
1827
To
1963

ST. LOUIS

By

MERLE D.
HARTSFIELD

CAIRO



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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

Anna S. Clary
1963

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This Is LIBERTY Illinois

A History of
The Village of Liberty
Adams County, Illinois

By Merle D. Hartsfield

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Dedication

To All Of The People
Of Liberty And Their
Posterity, That They
May Know Of Their
Beginning.

Liberty, 1960

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INTRODUCTION

This is to be a history of the village of Liberty, Illinois, a community sixteen miles east southeast of Quincy in Adams county. We have endeavored to recount the events and development of historic significance of the area. Names of individuals are used only in relation to these events and developments.

One hundred and twenty-three years after the village of Liberty was laid out, it became an incorporated town. During these years the village has not changed much, population-wise -- 1870 there were 400 inhabitants -- in 1960 there were 350. Businesses were born, prospered and died as the needs of the people varied with the changing times.

In the beginning, as now, grocery stores were located here, but even the contents of these have not remained static. No longer is axle grease or calico on the shelves of Liberty shops. A harness shop would be, indeed, out of place in the Liberty of the 1960's, but what would the citizens of the 1830's have done in a coin laundry?

Since little written history of Liberty has been preserved, we have relied on old records, memories and bits of information gleaned from personal memorabilia. Because of human frailty, memories sometimes conflicted and we endeavored to find some written corroboration.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY HISTORY

The first white men in this area were the Frenchmen, Father James Marquette and Louis Joliet, who sailed down the Mississippi in 1673 and claimed the territory for France. Nearly a century later and provided by the Treaty of Paris ratified in 1763, the Northwest Territory became English land. While the English and French quarreled over this vast wilderness, the native Indians, mostly Fox and Sac, tried to annihilate both enemies by means fair and foul. Although settlements sprang up on the lower Mississippi and the Ohio rivers, none, prior to 1776, were made north of the Illinois river.

Following the Revolutionary War, Virginia claimed the region west, including the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and part of Minnesota. In 1878 the Northwest Territory was organized and in 1809 the present state of Illinois was included in the newly formed Indiana territory. In 1809 Congress passed an act to divide the territory.

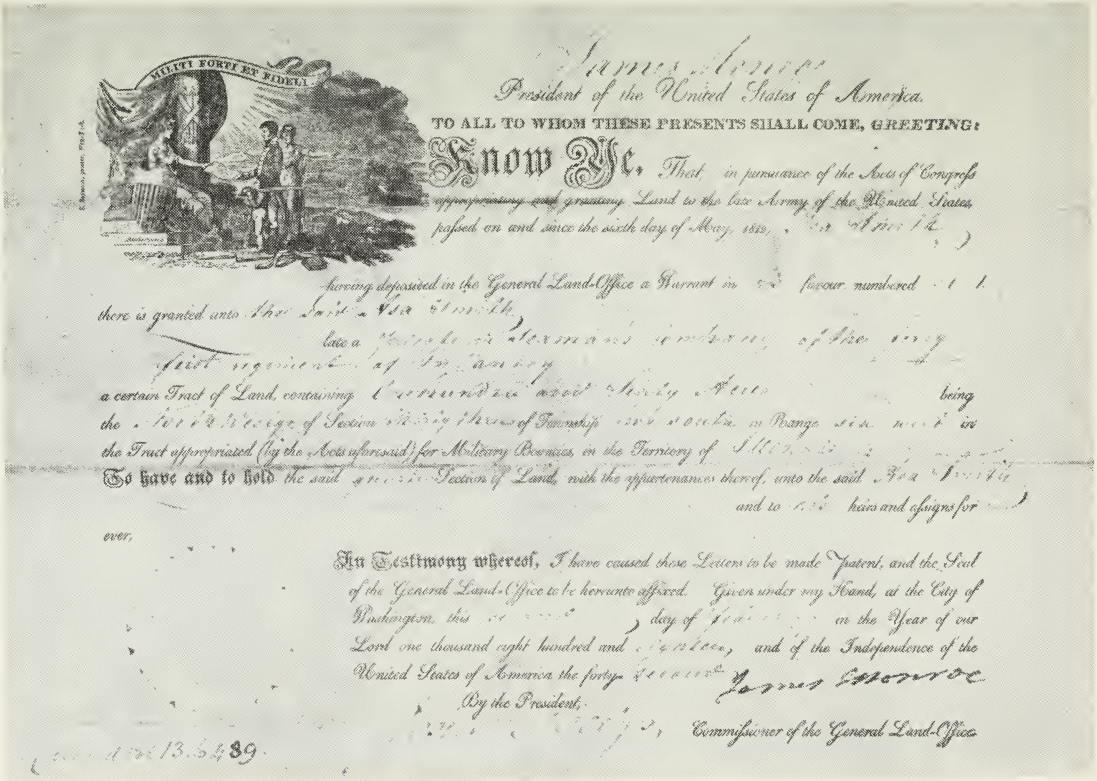
Thus in 1818, when Illinois became a state, the same tribes of Indians who had roamed over the area when Marquette came down from Canada still hunted in

the Liberty countryside. In fact, prior to 1813, there was an Indian village at the site now known as Quincy, but in that year a group called Mountain Rangers rode through the country and destroyed it. Several years later a man named Daniel Lisle arrived a little south of the present village of Liberty.

In 1822 three white men resided in what is now Adams county: Justice I. Perigo, who drew one quarter section in Sec. 9 in the N. part of Fall Creek township as early as 1820; John Woods, who built a cabin at the foot of Delaware street in Quincy and Daniel Lisle in Liberty. Land in this area was granted to veterans of the War of 1812 and it is supposed that is what brought some of these early settlers to this remote wilderness.

The county of Adams was formed by an act of Illinois legislation January 13, 1825. The first county election was held July 2, 1825, with 70 people living in the county.

Around 1830 two settlements were developing in the Liberty area. A group of Mormons established a town about a mile and a half southeast of the present village. The area was named Montgomery. The Mormons were forced to flee Kirtland, Ohio, in 1830. They moved west to Missouri, where a colony was founded at Independence in 1831. It is thought that those of the Liberty vicinity stopped here enroute to Missouri. They did not



James Monroe
President of the United States of America.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Know Ye, That in pursuance of the Acts of Congress appropriating and granting Land to the late Army of the United States, passed on and since the sixth day of May, 1812, [illegible]

having deposited in the General Land-Office a Warrant in [illegible] favour numbered [illegible] there is granted unto [illegible]

late a [illegible] of the [illegible] regiment of [illegible]

a certain Tract of Land, containing [illegible] being the [illegible] of Section [illegible] of Township [illegible] in Range [illegible] in the Tract appropriated (by the Acts aforesaid) for Military Bounties, in the Territory of [illegible]

To have and to hold the said [illegible] Section of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said [illegible] and to [illegible] heirs and assigns for [illegible] ever.

In Testimony whereof, I have caused these Letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land-Office to be hereunto affixed. Given under my Hand, at the City of Washington, this [illegible] day of [illegible] in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and [illegible], and of the Independence of the United States of America the forty [illegible]

James Monroe

By the President,

[illegible], Commissioner of the General Land-Office.

[illegible] 13,549

Land Grant of the War of 1812. Issued in 1818 by President James Monroe.

CERTIFICATE
No 12,152

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS Basil G. Stevens, Assignee of John Zuider

has) deposited in the **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** of the United States, a Certificate of the REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE at Quincy

whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said John Zuider

according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for the South West quarter of the North East quarter of Section Four, in Township five South, of Range five West, in the District of Quincy, subject to sale at Quincy, Illinois, containing forty acres

according to the official plat of the survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the **SURVEYOR GENERAL**, which said tract has been purchased by the said John Zuider **NOW KNOW YE,** That the **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**, in consideration of the Premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED, and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT, unto the said Basil G. Stevens

and to his heirs, the said tract above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereunto belonging, unto the said Basil G. Stevens and to his heirs and assigns forever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Millard Fillmore

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *have caused these letters to be made PATENT, and the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.*

GIVEN *under my hand, at the* **CITY OF WASHINGTON,** *the* 1st *day of* November *in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and* fifty *and of the* **INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES** *the* 75th

Millard Fillmore

By the President: Thos. H. Ellis P.R.

W. A. Wilson

RECORDER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

Recorded, Vol. 20 Page 111 5

Land Grant issued in 1840 by President Martin Van Buren.

stay long, according to one historian. A. H. D. Buttz bought the land, ran them off and destroyed the buildings.

Well ahead of the western movement in American history, members of the German Baptist or Church of the Brethern began a western migration, using natural waterways as routes for transportation. George Wolfe is thought to have been one of the first elders to settle west of the Alleghanies. In 1787 he had moved from Lancaster Co., Pa., to Fayette Co. in the western part of that state. He and his son built a flat boat and in April 1800 started down the Mononhahela River with Kentucky as their destination.

The family settled near Muhlenberg, Ky., where there was already a settlement of Brethern people who had come from North Carolina. It was from this place that the two sons of George Wolfe, Jacob and George, Jr., went north and in 1808 settled about 40 miles north of Cairo in what was later Union Co., Ill.

George Wolfe, though self educated, showed unusual ability in church leadership and was given charge of the Union Co. church. He was a forceful speaker in the pulpit and became the strongest preacher in the region. For 19 years he worked in Union Co. (He was Anti-slavery.)

In the year 1827 a number of the church members

moved from Union Co. to Adams Co., Illinois. Among these were the Hunsakers and Wm. Lierle. In 1831 George Wolfe, with 30 others, also moved near the site of the present town of Liberty, and in a few years half of the members of the Union Co. church had moved to Adams Co.

Paris T. Judy, who came to the area in 1834, owned 1,400 acres in Gilmer township and some property in Burton township where he was the first storekeeper. In 1834 he, evidently believing the area to be his, laid out a village from some lots in sec. 20 of Liberty township. He discovered that he did not own the property and quit the project.

In that year a post office called Liberty was established with John Norton the first postmaster. The headquarters was near the Brethern church.

In 1836 A. W. Dudley, son-in-law of a Kentuckian named Talbot, who owned sec. 20, resumed the work of establishing a village. The post office was moved to this locale in that year and A. H. D. Buttz was named postmaster of New Liberty, as it was now called.

Abraham Henry Dildine Buttz set out from Pennsylvania in 1831 searching for a permanent location. When he arrived in Adams county, he hired out to a Captain Pierce three miles east of Liberty, where they

built a house and opened a trading post and mill. In 1835 Mr. Buttz secured some land in Liberty where he built another store. In that year he also married Miss Mary E. Meachem, daughter of D. P. Meacham, who had a trading post and butcher shop across the street from Buttz.

The first recorded marriage in the township was that of Jacob Wigle to Mary Hunsaker, both members of the Brethern church, and was solemnized by Elder Wolfe. The first steam mill was built by Xander and Horkney and the first doctor was J. H. Hart. The exact dates of these events are not mentioned, as little is written about the developments of the village during the late 1830's and the 1840's.

A. H. D. Buttz, one of Liberty's founders, pictured with his family circa 1865. In the back row, Mary, Samuel, John Will, and Robert Michael. In the front row, Abraham Henry Dildine Buttz, Mira, A. H. D., Jr., Jesse Shaw and Mary Meachem Buttz.

CHAPTER 2

SETTLING THE AREA

During these years people were moving into the village and surrounding area. Many of the Germans came to this state from New York or Pennsylvania. The route west was not always direct. Those coming from Pennsylvania often followed the rivers, going first to the south, to the Virginias, thence to the Ohio River, sometimes stopping in Kentucky or Tennessee. Some, as we have already noted, stopped in southern Illinois where the Ohio meets the Mississippi.

Coming up the Mississippi, these pioneers followed friends or relatives to Liberty. Among these were the Lierles, the Vancils, the Grubbs.

There were also Irish immigrants -- such as Maurice Kelly who came in 1836, Alex Henry in 1843 or John Campbell in 1844. Some came directly from Germany as did the Millers in 1842 and C. G. Wagner who came from Prussia in 1836. Others were old American families as the Pond family, descendants of Samuel Pond who came from England in the 1630's to Connecticut. In 1848 G. P. Pond settled in Liberty.

Among these early settlers came Zachariah Lierle, a Revolutionary War veteran, having served eight years under General Washington. He died shortly after his arrival in this new land and was given special

burial as the only Revolutionary War Veteran in Adams County.

With him was buried a Frenchman. In an early history this Frenchman is merely called "Tournear." This story has come to our attention concerning this Frenchman. When Napoleon was taken prisoner in 1815, he had two body guards. One man was killed, the second man escaped and disappeared. This Frenchman named "Tournear," who was buried near Liberty in the late 1830's, is believed to be the long lost Napoleonic guard.

These two illustrious men are buried a short distance from the village of Liberty on the Merle Koch farm.

CHAPTER 3

PROGRESS IN THE 1850'S

During the 1850's a cultural development began. In 1831 the members of the Church of the Brethern had built a church some two miles from Liberty. By 1852 there were enough Presbyterians and Campbellites (Christians) to organize two more churches. That same year the village built a schoolhouse on Main Street on the now vacant lot between Pond's store and the American Legion Hall. The building was constructed of brick manufactured on the C. A. Wagner farm. W. H. Odell was the first teacher.

Since neither the Presbyterians or the Christians had a building, they used the "brick schoolhouse" for services. L. W. Dunlap was the first pastor to the Presbyterians and Elder Zilby Brown ministered to the Christians.

In 1853 the eighteen charter Christian members erected a building on Lot 4, Block 10, in the south part of town.

The year 1854 saw the Presbyterians begin building their church. By 1855 a Lutheran church was organized with the Rev. James Harkley the first farmer-preacher. The Pleasant View Baptist church was also organized in

1853 in the schoolhouse with Stephen Mullen the first minister.

In 1850 A. H. D. Buttz replaced his frame store with a brick building, using brick made locally. The building not only is still standing but is at the present, 1963, occupied by Buskirk Hardware.

Also circa 1850 James and Elizabeth Howerton came from Kentucky and located on a corner west of the present bank on Hannibal Street where they operated a hotel for many years.

In 1853 B. F. Grover became a merchant in Liberty, beginning the second general store in the village.

By 1860, as the war clouds hovered over the nation, the village of Liberty had developed into a definite trade center. A stage line came through Quincy. There were several general stores: the one run by A. H. D. Buttz; that of Grover and a third by Frank and Mercer. The Howerton Hotel was in operation for overnight visitors. George and Amos Linn were busy blacksmiths while George Tatman was the town carpenter. The Ponds took care of furniture and coffins. Dr. Bane administered to local ills. John Bayer had a wagon delivering "fresh meat" to the housewives. Reece Kendall ruled with an "iron fist" at the schoolhouse.

CHAPTER 3

Buttz store built from bricks made locally in 1850.

Buttz store building as it is today after recent remodeling.

CHAPTER 4

CIVIL WAR

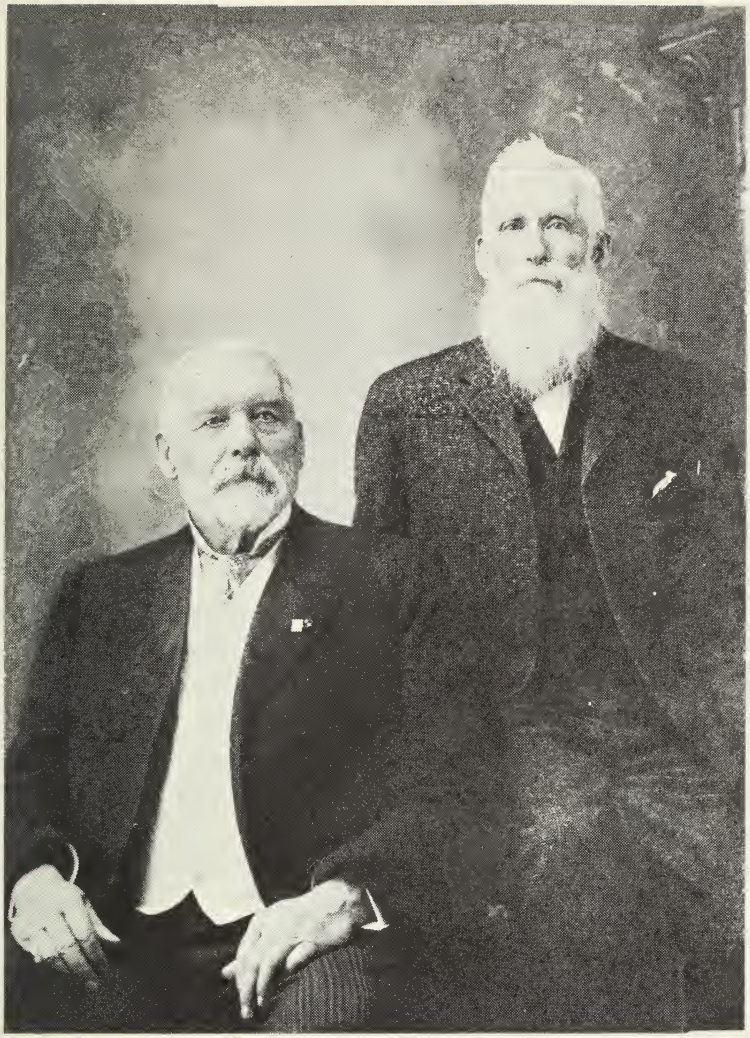
As in many areas where settlers came from several sections of the country, Liberty had both northern and southern sympathizers. During this period tow organizations of historic interest found members in the village of Liberty. One, the Knights of the Golden Circle, composed of pro-slavery Democratic southern sympathizers, was a secret society whose members deviled the Union prior and during the actual fighting of the Civil War.

The other group, the Wide Awakers, had for their members the anti-slavery Republicans. For awhile they, too, held secret meetings, but finally they were openly antagonistic. On several occasions bloodshed was narrowly averted when members of the two groups clashed.

It seems evident that the majority of the villagers were Unionists, for in 1862, Company "E" of the 78th Illinois Volunteer Infantry was formed of 100 Liberty area boys.

In August, 1862, Co. "E" was formed. John J. Mercer was elected Second Lieutenant and Philip H. Mercer was appointed First Sergeant or Orderly of the Company.

CHAPTER 4



Captain John J. Mercer and Lieutenant Philip H. Mercer, Civil War Veterans of the 78th Ill. Volunteer Infantry.

The group was mustered in to the United States service on September 1, 1862, at Camp Quincy. The unit fought in most southern Tennessee battles and was with Sherman in his renowned march from Atlanta to the sea. John J. Mercer was Captain in command of Co. "E" from the battle of Chickamauga, Ga., to the company's mustering out.

On October 5 (circa) 1863, a supper was given at Liberty for the benefit of the soldiers and it is recorded that a soaking rain fell on those attending.

In January of 1864, three fourths of the Illinois regiment re-enlisted and returned to Illinois for a furlough. A great rally was held in Liberty during which a fight developed on Main Street. It was chronicled that the soldiers knocked down all who disagreed with them. It would seem that, although perhaps out-numbered, the southern sympathizers were still in evidence.

It has been recorded that during the winter of 1864 smallpox broke out in the village. This must have added to the wartime miseries of the community.

On May 23rd, 1865, Co. "E" was in the grand review of Sherman's Army in Washington, D. C. They were mustered out on June 7, 1865, and were sent to Chicago and on to Liberty where they arrived on June 21, 1865. A huge supper was prepared for all who re-

turned. There were only 23 survivors of the original 100 boys who had left three years earlier.

Rueben Maxwell who died (circa) 1927 was the last Civil War veteran of the village. However, he did not belong to Co. "E" but to Co. "C" of the Illinois 112th Infantry.

Excerpt from the printed biography of Capt. J. J. Mercer and Lt. P. H. Mercer.

manded by General Jeff C. Davis. Our troops tore up the railroad from Kingston, Ga., to Atlanta, Ga., and on the 16th of November, 1864, General Sherman started off on his campaign to the sea, and our army arrived in front of Savannah, Ga., on the 10th of December, 1864 (distance from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Atlanta, Ga., 178 miles, and from Atlanta, Ga., to Savannah, Ga. 283 miles) laid siege to the city of Savannah, Ga., until the 21st of December, when the rebels crossed over into South Carolina, and our army took possession of Savannah, Ga., with over 150 pieces of artillery and about 30,000 bales of cotton. This General Sherman presented to President Lincoln for his Christmas gift. On this march to the sea our

CHAPTER 5

CHURCHES

Instead of continuing our history in strictly chronological order, due to large blank areas, we shall continue by topical development.

Since Libertywas established by religious groups, it is fitting that we look first at the development of Liberty's churches.

--- Church of the Brethern ---

As has already been mentioned, the Dunkard, German Baptist or Brethern church was organized in the early 1830's. It was named the Mill Creek church.

The Mill Creek church was a child of the Union County church as from that place a number of members moved to Adams County. One of the first things that they did upon arrival was to organize a church. In September, 1831, the deacons visited all the members and a church council was held. Finding all the members in love and union, they held a love feast on the fourth Saturday of September, 1831, in the house of Brother John Weigle. Elder Wolfe was the only minister present. From that date to at least 1881 not a single year passed without one or more love feasts being held in the Mill Creek church.

CHAPTER 5

At first these devout people had no church building and they met in homes, first one, then another. Sometime during the year 1831 a church building was erected near the present site of the Albert Mayfield home, two miles west of Liberty. This was the first meeting house built by the Brethern in the state of Illinois.

The Mill Creek church grew and prospered and within a very few years had a membership of over 200. Two ministers were elected, William R. Lierle and John McClintock. In 1850 they were both advanced to the second degree of the ministry. David Wolfe was elected as a minister in 1861 and three years later was ordained to the eldership by Elders Isham Gibson and John Fitz.

In the early 1870's the members of the Mill Creek congregation realized that they had outgrown the old meeting house and they began planning for a new church home. Since Liberty was a growing town and centrally located, it was considered a good place for a church. On June 14, 1874, the deed to an acre of land at the northeast corner of Liberty was given by Phillip G. Corkins and his wife to the trustees of the German Baptist Brethern church at Liberty. On this land the new church building was constructed.

During the next few years the Mill Creek church grew until there were appointments at six different places. In 1875 the district meeting of Southern Illinois (then

called "the Annual Council") was held in the Mill Creek church.

Church of the Brethern on the corner of Dudley and North Streets as it appears today.

After the death of Elder George Wolfe, the church came under the care of his son, Elder David Wolfe. At the quarterly council meeting held on December 1, 1894, it was unanimously decided to change the name of the church from Mill Creek to Liberty, and thereafter it has been officially known as the Liberty church.

In 1950 the membership was 93. Under the pasorate of Dewey Cave the old work was much revived. In 1960 Dewey Cave is again in charge of the congregation.

CHAPTER 5

--- Methodist ---

Prior to 1852 the Methodists had a circuit rider who met in homes and at "the old brick schoolhouse." There was no organized church, and when a church was organized, it was not within the village of Liberty.

--- Christian Church ---

As previously stated, the Christian church of Liberty was organized October 18, 1852, and held its first meeting in the old brick schoolhouse.

There were 18 charter members. The first church building was erected in 1853 on Lot 4, Block 10 in the south part of Liberty. It was built with the understanding it would be a union church, but it did not turn out as expected.

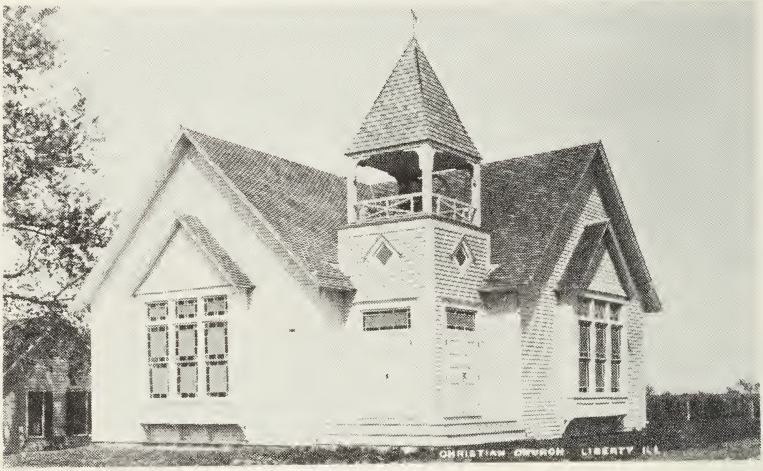
On October 29, 1905, a site was decided upon and in 1907 a new building was built at the present location. Pledges for $1,212.00 were received which more than paid for the church.

This building was dedicated May 5, 1907, by Brother J. Fred Jones of Bloomington, Illinois. L. L. McClean was pastor at the time.

In January of 1934 Mrs. Nellie Mercer proposed remodeling the church building with her donating the necessary cash and the congregation furnishing the work. On May 1, 1934, work was started to remodel this build-

ing. It was moved 15 feet east and four feet north of its original location. A new modern concrete basement was placed beneath, with a kitchen on the east, a stage on the west and classrooms between.

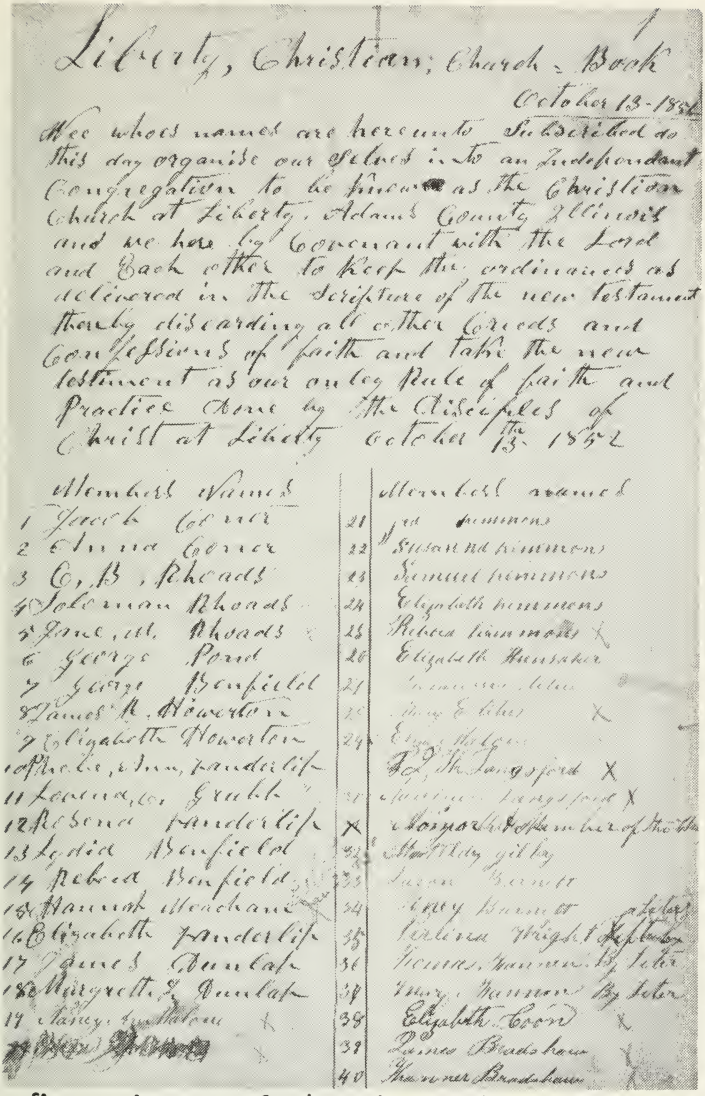
The church auditorium was completely redecorated and the front entrance remodeled. This building was dedicated by H. H. Peters on Sunday, October 14, 1934. The Rev. Taylor was minister at that time.



Liberty Christian Church on Main and Quincy Streets.

On April 17, 1944, the church purchased the Theodore Meyer property for $2,300 to be used as a parsonage.

On Sunday, November 2, 1952, the 100th anniversary of the church was celebrated at this same



Liberty, Christian; Church - Book

October 13 - 1852

We whose names are hereunto Subscribed do this day organise our selves into an Independant Congregation to be known as the Christian Church at Liberty, Adams County Illinois and we have by Covenant with the Lord and Each other to keep the ordinances as delivered in the Scripture of the new testament thereby discarding all other Creeds and Confessions of faith and take the new testament as our only Rule of faith and Practice done by the Disciples of Christ at Liberty October the 13. 1852

Members Names	Members names
1 Jacob Comer	21 Jos Simmons
2 Elvira Comer	22 Susanna Simmons
3 C. B. Rhoads	23 Samuel Simmons
4 Solomon Rhoads	24 Elizabeth Simmons
5 Jane, M. Rhoads	25 Rebecca Simmons X
6 George Pond	26 Elizabeth Shumaker
7 George Benfield	27 [illegible]
8 James R. Howerton	28 Mary E. Coles X
9 Elizabeth Howerton	29 [illegible]
10 Phoebe, Ann, Vanderlife	30 R. P. Langsford X
11 Lovina, C. Grubb	31 Marinda Langsford X
12 Rebecca Vanderlife	X Maria Stephenson member of Christ
13 Lydia Benfield	32 Martha Gilley
14 Rebecca Benfield	33 Susan Barnett
15 Hannah Woodbane	34 Mary Barnett
16 Elizabeth Vanderlife	35 Verlina Wright By Peter
17 James Dunlap	36 Thomas Simmons By Peter
18 Margrett J. Dunlap	37 Mary Simmons By Peter
19 Nancy Hallam X	38 Elizabeth Corn X
20 [illegible] X	39 James Bradshaw
	40 Warner Bradshaw

The first minutes of the Liberty Christian Church on October 13, 1852.

building with services both morning and afternoon. Many people attended the services throughout the day.

The Rev. Hobart Slogum is the present minister to the Liberty Christian church.

--- Presbyterian ---

On December 4, 1852, the following met to organize a church: Michael Collins and wife, Catherine; Amos Morris Collins and wife, Anna; Edmund Grubb and wife, Eliza Emily; Jonah Grubb and wife Ann Elizabeth; Mrs. Chritama Kennedy; Mrs. Laura Pond; Ephriam Grubb and wife, Susana; Samuel Miller and wife, Ellen Matilda. They decided that the church would be known as the First Presbyterian church of Liberty. Michael Collins and Edmund Grubb were elected ruling elders.

The Presbyterian Church building on Main Street as it appeared in the early 1900's.

Theodore Graff sold a lot on March 14, 1854, to the Presbyterian organization for $70. The members sought a central location on Main Street so the building could be used as a meeting house too.

Daniel Culp, Michael Collins and C. G. Wagner quarried rock and laid the foundation of the building. Theodore Graff and Jonas Benfield did the carpenter work. By this time the subscription money was all spent so that finishing the church took some time. After it was plastered, Miller and Funk, who had made a double corn plow, used the church as a paint shop for a season.

The first seats were hauled to Liberty from Griggsville where new seats had been purchased.

In the early days Singing Schools were held in the church with Samuel Norcross often teaching.

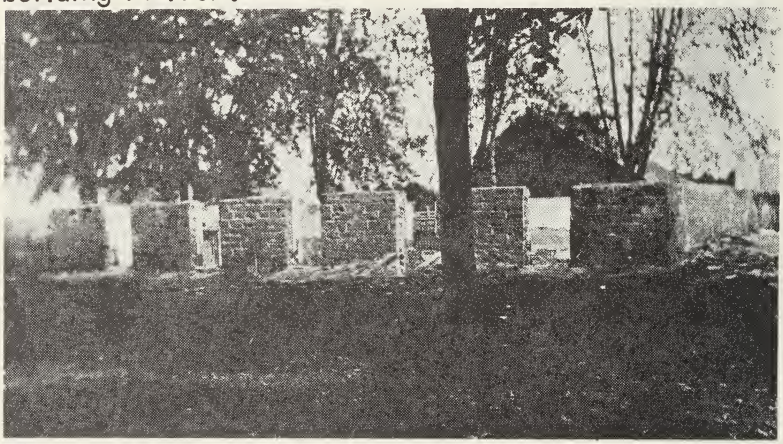
The church began to decline in the early 1900's and in 1925, it was disbanded. The building was sold to the Hofmeister Brothers to be used as a store. At the time of this writing, it is still used as a store building.

--- Lutheran ---

Zion Evangelical Lutheran church was organized April 4, 1854, under the Rev. Harkey. Services were held in the Christian, then the Presbyterian building, until a church was built in 1870.

The first officers were Elders: David Xander, George Keller, Sr.; Deacons George Volmer, Theodore Graff; Trustees, David Xander, George Keller, Sr., and Theodore Graff.

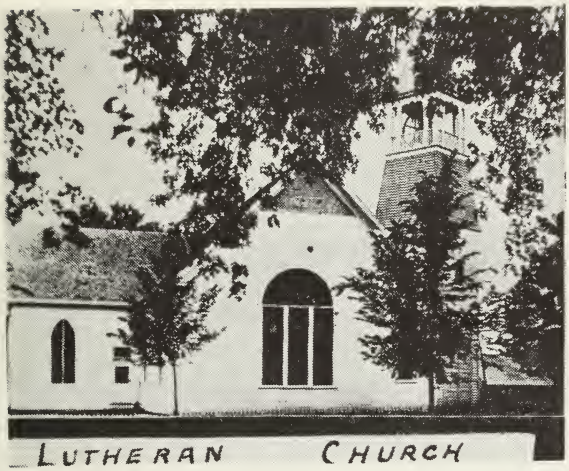
The first church was destroyed by fire resulting from lightning on August 7, 1907. Rebuilding began immediately and Christmas services were held in the new building in 1907.



The remains of Zion Lutheran Church after the fire on August 7, 1907.

The services were bilingual, English and German, until 1907 when the new church was completed. The old parsonage next to the church on Main street was built during the 1880's. A Sunday School addition was built and dedicated on April 23rd, 1923.

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran church observed its centennial in 1954. At that time the basement of the



The Zion Lutheran church on Main and North Streets as it appeared in 1915.

church was finished and the organ dedicated.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society of the church was organized on March 24th, 1887. The first officers were: president, Mrs. Sam Naylor; vice president, Mrs. W. H. Blanche; recording secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Weisenberger; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Aaron Zanders, and treasurer, Mrs. Phillip Hoehne. The organization had fifty members.

The young people's organization, the Luther League, was first organized in 1899. St. Peter's of Lost Prairie was united with the Liberty Lutheran church circa 1922.

The old parsonage was sold in 1956 and a new home was erected on the west side of the church while the Rev. Robert Nelson was pastor. In 1963 the Rev. A. O. Althafer is pastor of the congregation.

--- Catholic ---

The Catholic church of St. Brigid was established in 1847 and a church was built in 1869 and '70.

The first Catholic settlers of this territory were occasionally visited by the famous pioneer missionaries, Father St. Cyr and Father DeSmet, S. J. Later on Fathers McCabe and Stich ministered to their spiritual needs, riding horseback from one little Catholic colony to another with their vestments and altar supplies strapped behind them.

The parish was founded in 1860, with the church built about ten years later. The Rev. Thomas Cusack first official pastor from 1860 to 1870, still said Mass in parishioner's homes, according to their turns. One Mass per month continued to be the custom after the church construction due to the pastor having other parishes.

The Rev. John Kerr succeeded Father Cusack in 1875 and he had a sacristy built onto the church. On his monthly visits in summer and fall he roomed over the sacristy, with the ladies of the parish preparing his

meals. In winter and spring he availed himself of the hospitality of his friends.

The Rev. Clement Johannes, who came in 1885, was the first resident pastor of St. Brigid. During his time with the church, the residence was built.

From 1896 until 1899, the Rev. Thomas Costello, who was a skilled architect, was pastor. He did much to beautify the church premises. The ceiling was raised and arched, the windows mullioned, the sanctuary space increased and the church enlarged.

During the pastorage of the Rev. Wm. Pietsch, 1921-1927, he established a flourishing branch of the Holy Name Society.

--- Liberty Union Picnic ---

The Liberty Union Sunday School Picnic, more commonly called the Liberty Picnic, has been held in August for almost a century. It was a post-war social innovation - Civil War, of course. It is hard to decide whether it belongs with the development of the churches or with the community entertainment.

One story says that it was an idea brought to Liberty from Plainsville by Horace Griffin. Griffin, it seems, bought the old mill in Liberty in 1865 and moved to the village. He had been a member of the Plainville

Baptist church, but joined the Presbyterians here. He told Edmund Grubb of a picnic held in Plainville where the members of the Sunday School formed a procession and marched to the outing. He suggested that Liberty adopt this pleasant custom.

Whether the idea came from Plainville, or was a home grown one, the first of these annual community affairs, according to written history, was held on August 13, 1865, inBrody Grove, one mile south of Liberty. The Sunday Schools in the Union were the Christian, the Lutheran and the Presbyterian. A procession led by Henry D. Buttz, as mounted marshal, the Liberty Band and followed by the three Sunday School groups marched to the grounds. Dinner, eaten at noon, was brought in tubs and wash baskets and spread on the ground.

In 1870 the fifth picnic was remembered for the eclipse of the sun during the day.

In 1891 the Liberty Odd Fellows Lodge had opened a road through the woods and cleared a large picnic area near Buttz Spring. In that year the picnic moved to this location, commonly known as "Chandler Quarter," a mile and a half south of town.

By 1899 the event was attended by between five and six thousand with these picnickers coming in nearly 1,500 vehicles and 120 riding horses. These entrants to the grounds were recorded by Percy Enlow as they passed through the gates. Meals were still brought family style

and eaten with sweets sold on the grounds. The picnic area was officially closed at 6:30 p.m.

Despite such precautions, a few local citizens were bound to get out of hand, and in 1900 during the afternoon Thomas Clark, Revenue Collector from Quincy, arrested several bootleggers. Perhaps the year is better remembered for setting the official date for the picnic, the second Thursday of August annually.

In 1906 the site of the picnic was again changed - this time to the Balzer Grove a mile and a half north of Liberty. It was noted that year that the Noftz Cafe made 250 gallons of ice cream for the occasion.

On August 7, 1907, as a result of lightning, the Lutheran church was destroyed by fire. The second Thursday of the month was the 8th, and a Liberty picnic was held as usual, although the frivolity was restrained.

By 1910 Liberty "gay blades" were experimenting with those horseless carriages and were coming to "no good." Several of the "Gol-durn" machines blew up and one balked, holding up traffic for an hour or more.

In 1915, after surviving fifty years, the annual event was celebrated by more than 3,000 people who viewed the elaborate decorations and some 300 of these partook of the noon chicken dinner served on the grounds.

In 1919 the picnic was remembered by many

small fry....red lemonade was served.

When the Presbyterian church was disbanded in 1924, the Lutheran and Christian churches carried on with the Union picnics.

The picnic was finally held within the village proper in 1929 when the location was moved to the Liberty Park. A fried chicken supper became the big event, carrying the picnic into the evening hours.

The 1934 outing holds the dubious honor of being the hottest on record. The mercury climbed to 111 degrees, but the contests were held, despite the heat.

Another milestone was observed in 1940 on the 75th anniversary of the event. A history was written by a special committee, and members of the disbanded Liberty Bands furnished the music.

The 1948 picnic opened officially at 2:30 with a parade. Races, contests and the chicken supper were enjoyed as well as music furnished by the Liberty Band.

In recent years the picnic has become an evening event. Gone are the parades from the various churches, the afternoon spent in games and contests, the basket lunches and music furnished by an adult band. Instead, the Liberty school music groups furnish dinner music and a program is presented during the evening.

The villagers, former residents and friends gather in Liberty Park where they visit and renew old acquaintances. The chicken supper is now served under the roof of the shelter house built in recent years. Those who prefer hamburgers can snack at the refreshment stand.

As 1965 draws near, one can review the changes evolved during the 100 years. From a mid-day local outing, it has become an evening gab-fest for old friends from near and far.

This group of Liberty's young ladies entertained at a recent Liberty picnic, accompanied by Miss Esther Reid, Liberty High School teacher.

CHAPTER 6

SCHOOLS

As was the habit in the newly developed areas, education followed the period of settling, clearing and developing the land or business. Liberty followed the pattern. By the 1850's, nearly 20 years having elapsed since trading posts were established, "book larn'n" became a need.

It is supposed that there was some form of formal education prior to this. Marblehead, whose founder Justis I. Perigo was one of those three early settlers, was settled in the mid-1820's and boasted a school, building and all, in 1825. Burton's first school was taught in 1843-1844 with a building erected in the summer of 1844. Nothing can be found of a prior school in Liberty, but generally they evolved from house meetings to a regular building.

At any rate, in 1852, a one story building was built using brick manufactured on the C. A. Wagner farm. W. H. Odell is recorded as the first teacher.

This schoolhouse was a community center for a-while with each church meeting there for a period between establishment and an active building program.

At the end of the Civil War in 1866, the village had grown enough population-wise to deem the school

too small. At that time Ambrose Dudley deeded to the school trustees the block on the north side of Dudley street so long as it should be used for school purposes. P. H. Mercer planted shade trees on the playground and around the block. The second building was put up that summer of 1866.

By 1885 the patrons again saw the need of a larger school building and purchased the one-half block where the old high school stood. The building was erected during the summer of 1887. The first brick schoolhouse had been razed and the second building was sold to O. H. Collins and used by Pond Brothers for a warehouse.

As high school became more of an educational necessity, Liberty strove to keep up. At first only one year of high school was taught, then two, and finally by 1918 three years of accredited curriculum was being taught.

Between 1852 and 1918 fifty-seven teachers had taught Liberty children. The faculty in 1918 was comprised of principal S. Fred Hall; Arevilla Flick, eighth grade and assistant in high school; Mabel Sims, 5th, 6th and 7th grades and Zepha Welton, primary.

During the early 1930's the need for a more modern school was again recognized by the more progressive citizens in Liberty. Committees were appointed, the subject studied, and discussions were carried on both

at formal meetings and by the "man in the street." Several elections were held before the building on Main street at the northern edge of town was started.

An election was held on Sept. 3, 1938. On October 16, 1939, the citizens voted six to one for a new school. On February 17, 1940, an election was held for the establishment of a community high school district in Liberty and won by a vote of 682 to 285.

A $50,000 school was erected, made possible through a W. P. A. grant. The Liberty Community School building was designed by Martin J. Geise, architect from Quincy. The W. P. A. project for construction was approved by President Roosevelt on October 4, 1939, and operations started on November 6th of that year.

The project was completed September 30, 1940. The building is a one story structure of eight rooms with sanitary facilities and running water from a deep well. The exterior is native limestone trimmed with pre-cast cement fabricated on the site by W. P. A. workmen. This new school was dedicated on Sunday, December 1, 1940. An elementary school was built on the same campus in the 1950's.

The small one-room schools in the area were gradually closed, the high school curriculum broadened and Liberty became the education center for this section of Adams county. Children came in the traditional yellow school bus from the country lanes to attend twelve

CHAPTER 6

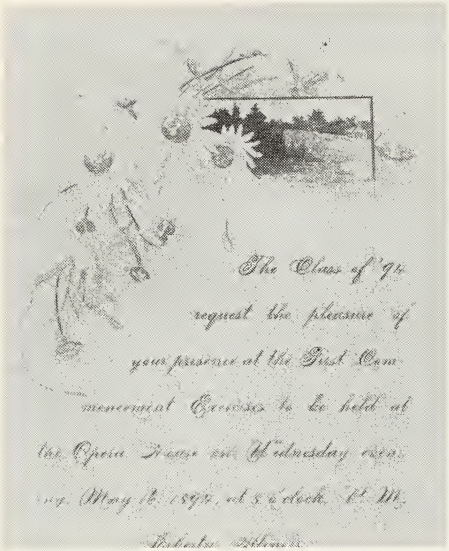
Liberty High School as it appeared in the early 1940's.

years of formal educational studies in Liberty Community School.

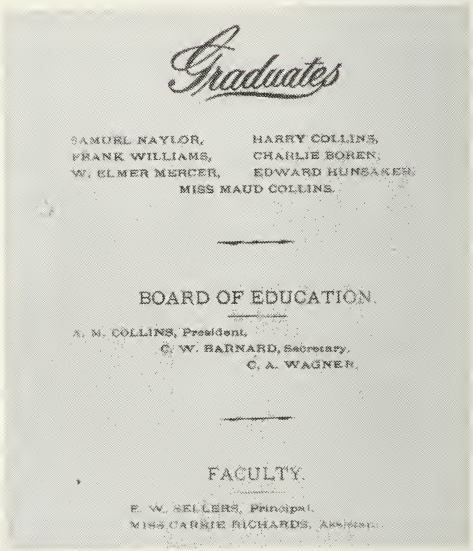
For nearly twenty years this "modern" school seemed adequate. As 1960 came up on the calendar so did the old question of improving the Liberty school.

Cramped for space in both the elementary and the high school building and needing more modern teaching facilities, the need became evident to concerned parents and broadminded residents of the school district.

Change in Liberty, as we have seen, is slow and sometimes painful. The change for a better building and


The Class of '94
request the pleasure of
your presence at the First Com-
mencement Exercises to be held at
the Opera House on Wednesday even-
ing, May 16, 1894, at 8 o'clock, P. M.

Liberty Class of 1894 sent out parchment engraved invitations.


Graduates

SAMUEL NAYLOR, HARRY COLLINS,
FRANK WILLIAMS, CHARLIE BOREN,
W. ELMER MERCER, EDWARD HUNSAKER,
MISS MAUD COLLINS.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

A. M. COLLINS, President,
C. W. BARNARD, Secretary,
C. A. WAGNER.

FACULTY.

F. W. SELLERS, Principal.
MISS CARRIE RICHARDS, Assistant.

There were seven in the Class of 1894 with two faculty members.

more facilities for the education of the youth is again discussed in the committee meeting and on the street.

Sides have been taken, lawyers hired and the struggle of the old familiar against the new and different is again being waged in Liberty.

An election was held and a $500,000.00 bond issue was approved by a majority of the qualified voters in the Liberty school district in July of 1961.

This election was contested by a group of voters who disagreed with the majority. The dissenters, with legal aid, caused a court order delaying the issuance of bonds and prohibiting progress for the school.

At the time of this writing, the issue has not been resolved.

CHAPTER 7

ORGANIZATIONS

Man, being the social animal that he is, cannot live in close proximity with his fellows without dividing into groups. The first such division comes with religious beliefs and the church which meets the individual requirement for the outward show of the inmost concepts of Christianity.

Soon the normal church activities did not fulfill man's need for his neighbor's company so small groups banded together and an organization was formed.

Whether the organization be labeled fraternal, patriotic, service or purely social, the need for human contact is the basis for its founding.

Prior to the Civil War the church and the individual stand on the ominous "slavery question" seemed to be the reason for meetings. We have stated earlier the primary beliefs of the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Wide Awakers.

--- Odd Fellows ---

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is a benevolent and fraternal order established in England which came to the United States in 1819. The lodges are primarily places of entertainment and social activities,

although some sponsor insurance plans for sickness, accidents and burial.

Some forty years after the Lodge's introduction in the U. S., Liberty men organized and affiliated with the Odd Fellow's Lodge in 1860. These early men were community-minded as well as interested in entertainment. They helped with a road and clearing at Chandler Quarter for the Liberty Union Sunday school picnics in 1891. They were instrumental also in the development of the Liberty Band.

The organization built a building on the corner of Dudley and Columbus Streets. Here they met as did the Masons and other organizations. It is supposed that this I. O. O. F. hall served as a community hall for many years.

In 1906 they built their own building with a Lodge Hall upstairs and a store downstairs which Klarner's occupied from 1906 until 1952. In 1956 (circa) the organization disbanded and sold the building to Lee Knipmeyer, a local business man.

The Rebekahs, the women's order of Odd Fellows, was organized in 1851 nationally. In 1893 the Liberty chapter came into existence. The ladies have been more stable, and though there have been some strained years, the Liberty Rebekahs are still an active organization.

THIS IS LIBERTY

--- Masonic Order ---

In 1863 the men of Liberty organized a Lodge of Free Masonry. This fraternal group, whose origin dates to medieval times, came to America with John Skine in 1682 and in 1729 there was an active lodge in Philadelphia, of which Benjamin Franklin was a member.

Thus during the War years the men of Liberty formed Liberty Lodge No. 380. That lodge has continued until the present time.

The men organized the lodge on April 27th, 1863, and received their charter in October of that year. George D. Mercer was secretary pro tem for the first meeting. J. W. Banker of Bodily Lodge No. 1, Quincy, was impowered by the Worshipful Grand Master of Grand Lodge of Illinois to set the craft to work under dispensation.

J. R. Howerton was appointed first master, B. L. Spencer, senior warden, B. R. Nations, junior warden and William W. Franks, secretary.

In 1901, after meeting for nearly 40 years in the I.O.O.F. Hall, at the August meeting a motion was made and carried to build a hall in New Liberty. A lot had been purchased on Main street in June of that year for $125.00. The building committee was composed of Mr. Zenos Winget, G. D. Mercer and S. F. McBride.

The Hall was dedicated on February 1, 1902, by the Most Worshipful Grand Master Isaac Cutter. There were guests from Payson, Kingston, Bowen, Herman and Bodily Lodge of Quincy. The ladies of the Order of the Eastern Star served a dinner.

The lower floor of the hall was used mainly for social gatherings of the lodge, but for a time it was used by the Bank of Liberty. It was used occasionally also by the Justice of Peace to try cases and was at one time rented by Edmund Keller to use for his undertaking business.

In 1898 the Order of the Eastern Star organized Chapter 392 in Liberty. This society, which was begun in 1876, is affiliated with the Masonic Order and membership is confined to master Masons and their women relatives. A meeting of the petitioners for a chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star was held in the I.O.O.F. Hall at Liberty on February 1, 1898. G. D. Mercer was appointed secretary pro-tem.

The following were escorted to their stations: Mattie McBride, worthy matron; S. F. McBride, worthy patron; Sadie Buttz, associate matron; Cle Enlow, secretary; Neva McCrory, treasurer; Ella McBride, conductress; Winnie Hartshorn, associate conductress; Elizabeth Mercer, Adah; Alberta Wolfe, Ruth; Maggie Klarner, Esther; Maud Winget, Martha; Kate McBride, Electa; J. B. Wolfe, warder; E. B. McBride, sentinel;

G. D. Mercer, chaplain; A. Hartshorn, marshal, and A. L. Enlow, organist.

In 1963 the chapter honored two fifty year members, Mrs. Julie Pond, who was initiated on July 13, 1913, and Mrs. Alta Grubb Lewis, who was initiated on July 15, 1913. Both served as worthy matrons of the chapter.

Liberty chapter has continued to exist and to occupy a place of distinction in the community.

Since modern transportation and communication has made neighbors of the nations, individuals find it less necessary to band together for mutual enjoyment. For this reason there has been a decline in the membership and attendance of most organizations and the Liberty chapters of national organizations have proved no exception.

--- Mutual Benefits ---

In the late 1800's there were a great many mutual benefit societies formed. These fraternal societies existed, in the main, for the purpose of a group insurance. The ritual and social function was generally considered of secondary importance. The modern Woodmen of America was such a society and, although organization and disbandment dates are unavailable, there is much evidence of the society's existence in Liberty in the early 1900's.

Another insurance group, the Adams County Mutual, was organized in 1910.

At the turn of the century, a ladies' group that falls into this category, the Royal Neighbors, was born. This organization took place in 1899.

As interest in mutual insurance society declined, so did these organizations from lack of a catalyst.

--- American Legion ---

Liberty men have gone to war each time the United States has been engaged in combat. There is no written record of any organizations of these patriots before 1920 when a handful of World War I veterans organized.

The men met on May 15, 1920, and expressed a desire to form an American Legion Post. Dr. W. E. Mercer was chosen temporary chairman and Gerald P. Frey, temporary secretary.

A committee was appointed to decide upon a name for the Post and they chose Blentlinger-Tournear, the family names of two Liberty boys who did not return from the "Great War" -- Prosper Tournear and Andrew Blentlinger.

Dr. W. E. Mercer was elected first Commander,

with Gerald Frey and Milton Dean serving as second and third Commanders.

During the early 1920's, the Legion was very active. In September of 1924, Miss Alice Gramke's music pupils had a program with the American Legion serving refreshments and reaping the proceeds. That year was obviously a busy one for the new group. On May 30th they sponsored a "Strawberry and Ice Cream Social." A speaker addressed the group and Liberty Band provided appropriate music. It is noted that the magnificent sum of $70.00 was monetary recompense for the effort.

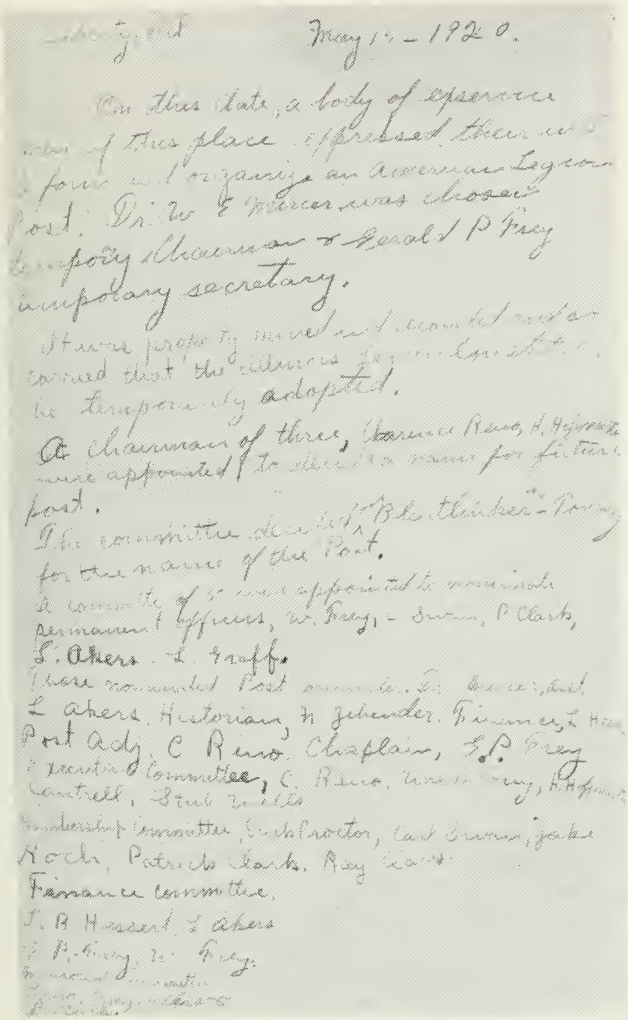
That same year, 1924, it is recorded that 1,000 people attended a Defense Day Program. A parade, singing and speakers provided the social diversion.

There is record of a playground area north of the Liberty Park which the local American Legion supervised. Children enjoyed the slides and teeter totter while the boys played softball.

In 1930 the spirit was still eager among the veterans. Such activities as Memorial Services, grave decorating, picnics, and oyster suppers served beneficial as well as social opportunities.

Interest in the Post seemed to ebb as the Second World War approached. Perhaps it was the spirit of the times.

With the termination of the shooting war and the


May 15 - 1920.

On this date, a body of ex-service men of this place assembled, then and there formed and organized an American Legion Post. Dr. W. E. Mercer was chosen temporary chairman & Gerald P. Frey temporary secretary.

Name proposed, moved and seconded and carried that the constitution & by-laws be temporarily adopted.

A chairman of three, Charles Reno, H. Hoffman were appointed to select a name for future post.

The committee selected "B. L. Timber" - Post, for the name of the Post.

A committee of 15 were appointed to nominate permanent officers, W. Frey, - Brown, P. Clark, L. Akers, L. Graff.

These nominated Post officers: Commander, Asst. L. Akers, Historian, H. Zehender, Finance, L. H. Post Adj. C. Reno, Chaplain, E. P. Frey, Executive Committee, C. Reno, [illegible] Frey, H. Hoffman, Cantrell, Steve [illegible]

Membership Committee, [illegible] Proctor, Carl Brown, Jake Koch, Patrick Clark, Roy [illegible]

Finance committee,

L. R. Hassard, L. Akers, P. Frey, W. Frey.

[illegible]

May 15, 1920 American Legion Post formed

return of the "boys," the American Legion again began to show life. During the 1950's an annual minstrel became the yearly project. The men enjoyed the activity perhaps more than the audience.

Memorial Day services were revived, suppers were again held to raise money and, in 1956, the Post bought the Odd Fellow's Hall on Main Street.

The lower floor was granted as a recreation center for Liberty's teen age youngsters. With the financial help of the Lions Club and physical assistance from interested adults, for several years this was known as "Teen Town."

As the youthful interest abated, the Legion began to use the entire building for their functions. A kitchen was installed in the rear, making the front part of the lower floor ideal for local suppers.

An American Legion Auxiliary in Liberty was granted a charter on September 1, 1928.

Charter members for this ladies' group were: Mrs. Edith Anderson, Mrs. Bertha Buttz, Mrs. Mabel Dean, Miss Frieda M. Mercer, Miss Grace Mercer, Mrs. Frieda Frey, Mrs. Josephine Hessert, Mrs. Grace Hofmiester, Mrs. Pearl Husman, Mrs. Nellie Mercer and Mrs. Myrtle Mitchell.

The first officers were: president, Frieda Frey;

vice president, Myrtle Mitchell; secretary, Grace Hofmiester and treasurer, Mabel Dean.

The Auxiliary is still an active organization with independent activities as well as those projects they have in conjunction with the Legion Post.

The cast of a Legion Minstrel during the late 1950's. Back Row: Orel Hess and Bill Oakman; front row: Delbert Bent, Orville Fischer, Ralph Roe, Floyd Graff, Carl Tournear, Bill Hartsfield and Forrest Baucom.

--- Business Clubs ---

Service organizations have come and gone as the needs and interests of Liberty's inhabitants have varied.

Those prior to 1900 have been lost to posterity through no fault of the organization's membership. Soon after 1900, the newspaper, having fallen by the wayside, a group of business men sought to help the cause of progress. Calling themselves the "Commercial Club," they sought a newspaper man who could be editor, publisher and printer. They also considered the educational needs and other civic necessities.

Much of the village's progress made at that time can be traced to the diligence of these men, Dr. W. E. Mercer, Steve Lawless and others.

By the 1920's the group was called the Community Club and its members were seeking better roads so that Liberty would be available to the outside world; they sought the Chautaquas and concerts, which provided cultural food for Liberty minds, and in general they tried to promote their town.

The lack of ready cash, the loss of the gaiety of the 20's is recorded as cause of dissension among club members in the minutes of a regular meeting in 1930. Individual problems and general loss of interest caused the club to cease to exist.

CHAPTER 7

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, the the forward-minded business men of Liberty again organized. This group called itself the Business Men's Association. These local entrepreneurs met to discuss Liberty's current problems and to consider possible solutions. Although the group could not claim the solution to any set situation, they contributed to many of the final answers.

--- Lions ---

At the close of World War II, a Lions Club was organized in Liberty, with a Quincy Club as sponsor. The Lions Club, started in 1914, is a non-political, non-sectarian civic organization whose members are business and professional men interested in the development of their community. The purpose of the individual club is to recognize community needs and to fulfill these needs by independent effort or through cooperation with other groups.

On November 18, 1946, a charter night was held in Liberty with the Eastern Star serving the dinner. the first officers were; Delbert Lierle, president; Wendell Mathis, first vice president; Donald Mulch, second vice president; Walter Hofmeister, third vice president; Horace Hipkins, secretary-treasurer; Delbert Linnemeyer, Lion Tamer; C. A. Gamble, Tail Twister; Ed Tenhouse, C. E. Lierle, Philip Balzer and C. P. Grey, directors.

Lions Club "Breakfast in Hollywood,"

The club presented a variety show called after a well-known radio program, "Breakfast in Hollywood," in 1947. The affair proved to be one of the club's early successes.

In 1950 the Fall Festival of the Lions Club was first held. This small fair-type event has become an annual occurrence in early September. A parade opens the festivities with two or three days of displays, programs and special activities following. A Miss Liber-

ty is crowned and numerous prizes go to lucky ticket holders.

Since its origin the list of presidents has become long. However, one man, Raymond Longlett from the Liberty Club, went on to become District Governor of the International Lions organization in 1960.

The club has accomplished many civic-minded activities from donation of equipment to the school, aid with glasses for the needy, to such things as contribution to the Teen Center, the Liberty Park shelter house and the annual visit of Santa Claus.

--- Women's Christian Temperance Union ---

The Women's Christian Temperance Union formed a local unit in 1902 in Liberty. Although the organization wasn't formed until the 20th century, nearly 50 years earlier Liberty ladies made national news with their ax on the drinking of alcoholic beverages. In August of 1860 eleven Liberty ladies raided the local tavern and created havoc.

It is evident that the taverns were an intricate part of Liberty in these early days as was the case in most villages. In the early 1880's there were five saloons in Liberty. In many hamlets these places were the social headquarters for the men of the area. We can assume that Liberty followed this pattern.

WOMEN WAR ON GROG.

LIBERTY, Ill.—Excitement rippled through this town after eleven women revolted against the grog shops and went about breaking some barrels of the spirits.

The townsmen met and passed this resolution:

"That we will defend our property at the risk of our lives against the eleven and all other women; that this is a free country, and men are allowed, under the laws, to do as they please; that women should not be allowed to smash up property, especially spirits; that women should be sent to the penitentiary for riotous conduct as well as men; that we will give 25 cents per head for the apprehension of the eleven and all others that talk that way; that we are under many obligations to the proprietors (of the local shops) for the spirit they have so liberally used in this effort to maintain law and order; that everybody should learn to mind their own business, especially women."

The eleven are still receiving reinforcement from the women around and the war is not yet ended.

The national Women's Temperance Union was organized in 1874. They organized to fight the saloon and to educate the public concerning the evils of intoxicating beverages, but Frances Willard, during her presidency, developed more active areas including world peace, women's suffrage, child labor, prison reform and moral education.

CHAPTER 7

A group of thirteen women in Liberty in 1902 decided to organize an anti-drinking group in the village. These ladies included Mrs. Maggie Grubb, who was elected president; Mrs. Laura Mercer, secretary; and Mrs. Minnie Frey, club treasurer. The organizational work was done by Mrs. Rebecca Vickers, then Adams County president of the W. C. T. U., and a Mrs. Hall, a state worker.

The Union was very enthusiastic. The president attended all county and state conventions, once even Mrs. Grubb served as president for ten years.

Mrs. Anna (Steve) Lawless was then chosen president, but after serving a year or two, she resigned because of other duties.

Mrs. Minnie Frey was then elected to the office of president and served for seven years. During the first World War the Union was busy sewing, knitting and making kits for the boys. During this period Mrs. Frey organized a Loyal Temperance Legion with over twenty boys and girls between the ages of eight and fourteen. This organization supported a war orphan in France. The money was raised by entertainments, selling popcorn, candy and other miscellaneous ways. They supported the orphan for four years.

During the 1920's the February meeting of the Union became famous in the village. Mrs. Elizabeth

Breckenridge was hostess for this inspirational and entertaining meeting. Each year the February meeting was a memorial service for members who had died and to honor Frances Willard. Mrs. Breckenridge's birthday also fell in that month, and she chose at that time to entertain the W.C.T.U. members, families and teachers of the Liberty Township schools. Mrs. Breckenridge continued this custom as long as her health permitted.

It was also in the early '20's that a public library was started by the organization. The books for public use were kept on special shelves in the Liberty bank. The work was kept up for a number of years with many using the facility. Later, when it was discontinued, a number of the books were given to the school library. There are still a few of the books in the bookcase in the bank lobby, reminiscent of the W.C.T.U. library.

After the repeal of the 18th Amendment in 1932, Liberty found itself with an open saloon. This was something new to that generation of villagers for none could remember the earlier days. This posed an opportunity for the W.C.T. U. to prove its mettle.

First, they contacted George Wilson, a Quincy lawyer who was known for his stand on prohibition. He instructed the ladies on the way to eliminate the tavern, and how to do the task according to law. They secured the required number of signatures to bring the matter to

a vote. How zealous the participants were showed when the votes were counted on the regular election day. Nearly two and one half voters to one balloted to ban the saloon.

Much work by the W.C.T.U. has been with the schools in recent years. Film, temperance literature, books and stories are furnished to the school each year. During the late 1950's and 1960's poster contests have been held for the upper grades of the school.

The W.C.T.U. has always been ready to help in efforts towards the improvement of the community. The Union had a part in the planning of the State Convention in Quincy in October of 1960. Three members from the Liberty unit have served as a county president, Mrs. Fred Frey, Mrs. George Doole and Mrs. Walter Hofmeister.

There have been, doubtlessly, organizations we have failed to mention. The ladies have had various homemaking clubs, the Home Extension had a chapter in the village. An active Garden Club was started by Mrs. Bee Ehlert in 1950, and the ladies have done much to beautify the village.

There have been several youth organizations; 4-H Club for rural youth had chapters in Liberty as well as Boy Scouts.

CHAPTER 8

ENTERTAINMENT

The step from organizations to entertainment is sometimes non-existent. Even those groups whose mission is dedicated to a cause often afford the members a source of entertainment.

In the early days when parties for pure entertainment were often frowned upon, the usual excuses were used. Sewing bees, quilting parties, husking bees and sings were fair reasons for fun.

It has been noted that the Presbyterian Church was the scene of singing schools. These afforded the young and young-at-heart a chance to come together and enjoy singing the old songs and learning the new ones. When, after much hard work, the singers and their teacher felt the public should be allowed to enjoy their music, a concert was arranged.

Holiday festivities were also a source of entertainment. Of course, Christmas was a church and family-centered holiday with the planned programs cause for mid-winter reminiscing.

The 4th of July ran a close second to Christmas on most early social calendars. Great picnics were planned, complete with long-winded patriotic speakers and relay races.

CHAPTER 8

THE LIBERTY SINGING CLASS

—WILL GIVE A—

CONCERT

Under the Direction of Prof. Forgy,

At the Public School Building in Liberty, Saturday Eve. April 6, '89,

CONSISTING OF SOLOS, DUETTS, QUARTETTES, ETC., ETC.

PROGRAM:

1. Exercises from the Chart.
2. Rudimental Drill.
3. Instrumental Solo, - - - - - - - - - - - - Hattie Nichols, of Payson
4. Whippowill Song, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - by the Class
5. "The Golden Gate,"—Quartette—Misses Breckenridge & Widenhammer, Messrs Fry & Hinton
6. Labor Song—Chorus.
7. Bad Cold—Quartette, - Misses Bertha Hunsaker and Ada Buttz, Messrs. Fry & Forgy
8. "They That Trust in the Lord—an Anthem.
9. Has Father Been Here?—Solo, - - - - - - - - - - Emma Kuntz
10. The Resurrection—Chorus, - - - - - - - - - - - By the School
11. Gentle Gales—Duett, - - - - - Nora B. Mercer and Bertha Hunsaker
12. Fortune Teller—comic Quartette, - Misses Hunsaker & Buttz, Messrs. Buttz & Forgy

INTERMISSION.

13. Instrumental Solo, - - - - - - - - - - - - - Nora Mercer
14. Hunter's Chorus, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - by the Class
15. Pictures in the Clouds—Duett, - - Helen Breckenridge and Nellie Widenhammer
16. Let us Bow Before Him—Quartette—Misses Moore & Buffington, Messrs Moore & Hoffmeister
17. The Night Bird's Cooing—Solo, - - - - - - - - - - Miss Mercer
18. Hallelujah Anthem—Chorus, - - - - - - - - - - - by the School
19. Solo—(selected), - - - - - - - - - - - - - Miss Breckenridge
20. The Minute Gun at Sea—Duett, - - - - - - - Ada Buttz and Nora Mercer
21. Magnifying the Name of God—Anthem, - - - - - - - - by the School
22. Come Up from the Sea, Oh Dead—a Bass Solo, - - - Glen Spencer, of Payson
23. The Family Row—Comic Quartette—Misses Moore & Buffington, Messrs. Moore & Hoffmeister
24. Solo—selected— - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Myrtle Forgy
25. Let All Rejoice and Sing—Anthem, - - - - - - - - - - - by the Class
26. Little Gipsy Girl—Solo, - - - - - - - - - - - - - ———
27. O, How Lovely—Anthem, - - - - - - - - - - - by the Class
28. The O. P. R. A.—a comic Quartette

Misses Hattie Nichols and Nora Mercer, Organists.

Admission, 20c. Children under 12, 10c.

Doors Open at 7 o'clock. Exercises begin at 7:30 P. M.

Concert Handbill of 1889

July 4th Parade, 1894

In 1894 Liberty was the scene of a tremendous 4th of July celebration. Five thousand persons were present to witness a mile long parade which formed at the Opera House. A dinner was served and then all went to the picnic grounds a mile south of Liberty where the program was climaxed with a balloon ascension.

Several buildings housed activities in the early days, the "old brick schoolhouse," the Presbyterian church and a building sometimes called the Opera House but more often called Spangler Hall. It was built circa 1890 by Oliver Vancil on Dudley Street at Chicago Street. The two upper stories served as meeting places and the lower was used to house the horses of the revelers.

CHAPTER 8

Building of "Spangler Hall"

After the construction of the Opera House on Main Street in 1914, the old Spangler Hall became sort of a gymnasium where basketball and other games were played. In the late 1920's roller skating was even introduced to the old hall. The building was torn down about 1928.

The Opera House on Main Street was a grand thing to the village. The magnificent structure housed the newspaper office and bank downstairs and the fine assembly hall on the second floor. This meeting place boasted three exits, fire escapes, two round oak furnaces, electric lights, foot lights, scenery and curtain for the stage, and fifty feet of tables for socials.

Many a Chautauqua speaker, msuch social fun, and later even movies were shown in this auditorium.

But like all objects animate and inanimate, the Opera House grew old. The magnificence deteriorated to obsoleteness. The interior was gutted of usable material and left to the rates. Wind and weather have eroded the exterior until now it has secret entries to aggravate those who seek to maintain its shell. At this writing the bank and the newspaper still use the lower floor, but it is no longer a grand thing.

The Chautauqua movement was started at Chautauqua Lake, New York, in 1874. It was a system of popular assemblies for education and entertainment by lectures, concerts, et cetera, which were held for several consecutive days. This movement developed and flourished until the 1920's. The first World War proved the death of the itinerant Chautauqua programs which moved from town to town with the professional lecturers, public figures and musical personages.

To the villagers and those who lived near Liberty, the annual Chautauqua gave them an opportunity to hear first-hand discussions on current topics and to enjoy the presentations of musical aggregations. As late as 1925, the Liberty Bee announced the annual Chautauqua season in Liberty.

--- Liberty Band ---

Music has long played a role in the amusement

of mankind. It is generally a pleasure to hear music and frequently affords its players as much joy as its hearers.

The first Liberty Band was organized in 1862 and was known as the Farmer's Band. It functioned until 1865 when it was reorganized. It is assumed that the Odd Fellows membership was instrumental in the reorganization and the aggregation became known as the Liberty Band. Early members included Jonah and Edmund Grubb, Oliver, Fred and Walter Collins, George Pond, "Squire Norcross," Dan and Sam Foster and Ed Xanders.

By 1889 Liberty Band was famous in the area, reaching all the way to Macomb and Colchester. Professor Jonah Sellers was director. He led the musicians to win many contests - not the least was the Colchester Picnic circa 1890, where a Macomb group felt indignant that they had been bested by the Liberty Band.

Concerts were played in many nearby towns. Concerts played in Griggsville and Clayton merited the gentlemen rave notices in the Griggsville and Clayton press. Each proclaimed a desire for a repeat performance by the Liberty Concert Band. Special recognition was given to the Grubb Brothers' rendition of "La Paloma" and to Mr. C. G. Buttz' solo, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."

In 1890 C. G. Buttz became Band director, and

for many years no social was complete without the music provided by the Liberty Band.

Following World War I the Band was reorganized with the encouragement of the Commercial Club. They again presented concerts, and in April of 1924, celebrated National Music Week with an entire week of musical programs with the help of various other Liberty music groups.

Many Liberty family names are associated with Liberty Bands. Some of these are: Ladd Grubb, Dr. W. F. Snider, George Graff, Charlie Baird, Daniel Volmer, George Zehnder, Seymour McCrory, Walter Klarner, Clarence Pond, Floyd Mercer, Waldo Frey, W. A. Robinson, Jake Muder, Raleigh Balzer, Alva Lierle, Floyd Wagner, Ernest Kulisch, Fred Frey, Ray Clary, Floyd Spangler, Carl Henning and Henry Felsing.

The 1930's was a dispiriting time to Liberty as it was to much of the nation. Many of the old ways finally disappeared from the community. With automobiles becoming the mode of transportation, they also affected the mode of living. The lure of distant places could be met and, with this, many types of local entertainment became passe.

CHAPTER 9

Economic Development

Liberty Business Houses decorated for Corn Festival circa 1920

As has been mentioned before, A. H. D. Buttz in the 1830's opened a trading post in what is now the village of Liberty, thus taking the first step toward Liberty's business history.

A military road came through the village in those days from Atlas to Warsaw. Although much was transported via the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, a short route was needed between wilderness outposts. We can imagine that many of Mr. Buttz's customers were either military personnel or on military missions.

The steam operated flour mill was an early addition to the town's business. The date of its origin is unknown, but its builders were Xander and Horkney. Ownership of the mill changed hands from time to time through the years, but it was in operation for over sixty years.

Nothing remains of the site in the village today except the rim of the mill pond near the corner of Hannibal and Dudley streets. This pond was useful to the residents in various ways. It was used for religious purposes as a bapismal, for recreation as a place to ice skate, and we are sure that more than one Liberty lad took a dip in its cool waters in the summertime.

Blacksmiths were a necessity in these early times and A. H. D. Buttz provided this service for the settlers. In 1870 it is noted that H. Fisher, who came from Germany in 1856, was a blacksmith in Liberty. In 1896 John Kuntz, C. W. Linn and W. E. Plowman were all earning a living by plying their muscles to this trade. In Liberty today, Fred Easly still earns a living by catering to the needs of those who still occasionally have a job for a blacksmith.

The Howerton Hotel provided the first overnight accommodations for the traveler passing through Liberty. Later the Grover Hotel came into existence on Main Street and it thrived for forty years. The first barber shop was in the Grover Hotel.

CHAPTER 9

Breckenridge Hotel in 1910

The Grover became known as the Breckenridge Hotel and, as such, became Liberty's last place where the weary traveler could rest before proceeding with his journey. The distance to Quincy shortened with the "hard road" and good cars made a stop-over in Liberty unnecessary and inconvenient by the 1930's.

Undertaking is an unavoidable business, whether the community be large or small. Before embalming became common, the carpenter usually made the coffin and the minister provided the rest of the service for the bereaved family. In 1863 Charles Karney was carpenter and undertaker in Liberty.

In 1899 Fred Frey bought the undertaking busi-

ness from Karney. Twenty years later, in 1919, his son, Gerald P. Frey, became a partner in the business. The family also operated a hardware store in the village. The present undertaking establishment in Liberty is owned by Gerald Frey's widow, Mrs. Ada Frey.

As with the blacksmith and harness shops, other types of early businesses have ceased to exist. Butcher shops have been integrated with the modern grocery store.

A millinery shop is non-existent as is the local lady who made clever little bonnets for the Liberty ladies. Two ladies who provided head creations for Liberty were Julia McMahon, who was busy during the 1890's, and Mrs. W. C. Baird, who worked her magic during the 1920's.

Dressmaking has not declined completely. Perhaps the ladies who with needle and cloth created fashions were a requisite to the former Mrs. or Miss Liberty, whereas today they are sought more for specialty work. At any rate where Helen Jones did the work for a previous generation, Mrs. Roy Taylor does it now. Abraham Koetzel, shoemaker, has no modern counterpart.

Another business which has ceased to exist, although the need has remained, is a drug store or pharm-

acy. As early as 1870, George A. Ferguson was listed as a druggist. George D. Mercer was the druggist from 1880 until 1909. For twenty-four of these years, he was also postmaster for the village. Dr. W. E. Mercer took over both positions in 1909. Dr. Mercer was proprietor of the drug shop for many years. This is another business which did not survive the perilous depression years.

This takes us to the field of medicine. Doctors were once plentiful in the Liberty area. In 1870 P. G. Corkins and J. M. Grimes were both listed as physicians in Liberty. Dr. Corkins practiced medicine in Kingston prior to coming to Liberty in 1869.

In 1896 Dr. G. W. Enlow and Dr. J. T. Spence were tending the sick of the community. Dr. W. F. Snider and Dr. W. E. Mercer also served the sick of Liberty at one time. The last doctor to have residence in the village was Dr. W. E. Davidson, who served the community well until shortly before his death in the late 1950's.

Dentists have had offices in the village, although none seemed to maintain residency. In 1896 Dr. M. Rice rented a room from Mrs. C. A. Mercer and had an office which was open on Tuesdays. From circa 1912 until the 1930's, Dr. Hollenbeck, a Payson dentist, came to Liberty once a week.

We can only hope that the villagers' teeth were obliging and caused trouble only on the appointed days.

As the horse declined and the automobile became more common, the garage and car dealer replaced the blacksmith and harness maker. By 1920 Liberty Motor Company was selling Fords and Taylor Garage handled the competition, Chevrolets. Although the number and makes of automobiles have grown to astronomical numbers, the dealers of cars in Liberty have dwindled to a single Chevrolet dealer, Knipmeyers.

For those who had not been convinced of automotive permanency or for some other reason did not own a car, a hack line ran between Liberty and Quincy. This was operated by Jake Spangler for awhile in the 1920's. Enoch Swisher also filled a local need by hauling freight between these two points for a time.

During the mid-20's a mining company enjoyed a brief success. Called the Liberty Coal Company with Howard and Arthur Merideth in control, they mined the fuel southwest of the village.

Just prior to World War I, under the guidance of Steven Lawless, Liberty enjoyed a spirit of prosperity which resulted in the building boom which brought forth several new houses, the bank building and a busy newspaper office.

Early in 1903 Hez G. Henry, cashier of the People's Bank of Camp Point, assisted by M. H. Callahan, also of Camp Point, and H. E. Schmedeskamp of

Quincy, organized a state bank for Liberty with $25,000 capital stock. George D. Mercer of Liberty and George R. Stewart of Quincy placed the necessary stock.

On June, 1903, the first stockholders' meeting was organized with M. W. Callahan, president, and George Mercer, cashier. The quarters for the new bank were in the Masonic Building on Main Street.

In 1904 the bank changed to a private bank with the same officers. Steven G. Lawless was appointed assistant cashier in 1907 and elected cashier on July 2, 1912.

In 1913, new quarters appearing to be necessary, the directors decided to erect a new building with the bank on the first floor and a community auditorium on the second floor.

The new building was occupied on January 1, 1914.

In 1916 the Liberty Bank opened a branch in Beverly, Illinois. This venture proved to be unsuccessful.

On March 29, 1920, Steven Lawless was killed. He was succeeded by his wife, Anna, in the Liberty Bank. Mrs. Lawless had been assistant cashier of the operation from 1905 until 1907. In that same year, 1920, the bank again became a State bank.

In recent years the Farmer's Bank of Liberty has prospered. It now enjoys the position of being one of the few surviving small banks in Adams County. Earl Sims was an able cashier until his election to Adams County Treasurer in 1958. At that time Raymond Longlett was named the bank's cashier, and in 1963, he is ably assisted by Mrs. Ruth Walker, assistant cashier.

--- Newspaper ---

As stated earlier the Commercial Club of Liberty in the early 1900's sought a newspaper editor and printer. The village had had several publications before this. In the early 1890's a publication called the Liberty Herald had served the community. In the latter part of that decade, the Liberty Bell came into existence. In October, 1895, R. L. Anderson was publisher-editor of a paper which contained local advertising and news on pre-printed sheets which contained much general information. In 1897 Hill and Sears were the listed editor-publishers of the local press.

From what we have been able to ascertain, due to mailing irregularities, the Post Office Department of the United States withdrew the mailing permit and the paper collapsed.

Since each surrounding village, Plainville, Payson, Camp Point had a weekly publication, Liberty was indeed at a disadvantage. It is no small wonder that

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The Liberty Bell.

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A Live, Local, Independent, Weekly Newspaper.

VOL. I. LIBERTY, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY APRIL 23, 1896. No. 30.

Must Sell Quick!

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Grand Open

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JOSEPH BROS. & DAVIDSON

NOTE A FEW PRICES

JOSEPH BROS. & DAVIDSON, Quincy, Ill.

Grand Reduction Sale!

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Every customer receives a lovely English illustrated picture book free of charge by purchasing your bill of Dry Goods at

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Quincy, Ill.

THIS IS LIBERTY

THE LIBERTY BEE

VOLUME 7. LIBERTY ILL., THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 1919. NUMBER 39.

OUR MOTTO;

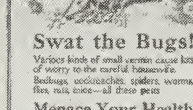
To help everybody that deserves help.
To guard safely the belongings of its customers.
To assist and advise properly to the advantage of our patrons.
To make a better and more prosperous central Adams County.

THE FARMERS BANK

LIBERTY, ILL.

Bank open from 8:30 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.

STEVEN G. LAWLESS, Cashier.



Swat the Bugs!

Various kinds of small vermin cause lots of worry to the careful housewife. Bedbugs, cockroaches, spiders, worms, flies, rats, mice—all these pests

Menace Your Health

and you should exterminate them at once with safe and sure poison.
Tell us your bug troubles and we will give you something to eradicate them—Sure!

Mercer Drug Co.

THE HOME OF MILES FAMILY REMEDIES.

Our Daily Passenger & Package Service

is as convenient as an

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Use it and be convinced

Special trips to Quincy on Wednesday and Saturday nights

Jace Spangler

Liberty Depot. Phone Mexico 6-100, Quincy.

NEW LIGHT RATES

[illegible]

WILL MEET JULY 5TH

[illegible]

OUR CHAUTAUQUA

[illegible]

MAJOR MERCER HOME

[illegible]

FOURTH AT CAMP POINT

[illegible]

ASSESSMENT ROLL

[illegible]

LIBERTY HIGHWAY

[illegible]

John Deere and IHC
Riding and Walking
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THE KLARKER IMPLEMENT CO.

WE

Are Headquarters

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EVERYTHING

POND BROS.

FREIGHT LINE

And Parcels

[illegible]

Enoch Swisher

civic-minded business men sought to remedy this situation.

The gentleman who answered the call to the satisfaction of the callers was W. A. Robinson. He served the community long and well from 1912 when he began the publication of the Liberty Bee. He became the voice of Liberty's progress and, despite the back-breaking task of weekly publication, was active in community affairs. The hand set type gave way to newer methods of printing.

The depression years were survived by the paper despite the lack of advertising and the fact that subscriptions were often paid for with farm produce. A dedicated man did not let even the elements cause him to temporarily fail to publish the weekly "Bee." This is pointed up by the January 14, 1937, edition of the paper which was only an eight by ten inches in size, hand set. The reason for this miniature was a winter storm which had disrupted electric service for a week.

With the close of the second World War, Robert Ehlert of Michigan became editor of the Liberty Bee. An ambitious man, whose wife, Bee, lent personality and talent to the venture, he helped to revive interest in the paper. In 1955 he sold the paper to W. N. and Merle D. Hartsfield, who operated it until June, 1962.

Our pleasure in the people and the community led to the writing of this volume.

Now, in 1963, the Liberty Bee is owned and operated by Mrs. Flora Brown.

--- Restaurants ---

Places for the visitor or the resident to eat have always been an essential to a trade center. Liberty's early hotels provided meals for many years. As the need for sleeping accommodations became less, businesses with the sole purpose of serving meals became more evident. The Noftz Restaurant is one well remembered by most old timers, and it was in operation for at least twenty years. Others have opened, served the public for awhile, and then closed.

As this is written, the village of Liberty has not a single public eating facility within her corporate limits. Several good country cafes are enjoying the benefits of our modern speed, for within minutes they can be reached by auto from the village. Thus these nearby cafes are serving the town as once did the village restaurant.

One of the names on the business register has remained there for the past four generations. That name is Pond. The first Pond, G. P., came to the Liberty area in 1848. He was recorded as a farmer in the 1870 Adams County Atlas.

His sons and daughters became more commerce-minded. One daughter, Laura, married Oliver Collins,

a Liberty tradesman. A son, George Philip, was engaged in various phases of marketing in early Liberty. On September 17, 1898, he sold his store to his sons, Edmond, William and Albert.

A few years later Edmond purchased the business from his brothers and became sole owner of the thriving general store. In 1896, he married Helen Breckenridge, whose family owned the hotel, and his son, Elmo, was born in 1907. In 1928 Elmo joined his father in the mercantile business.

This type of business relationship is still in operation. Although the general store, where the needs of the entire family was met, has given way to a modern supermarket, the Pond family still retains proprietorship. Elmo Pond is now in partnership with his son, Wayne.

Wayne Pond and his wife, the former Carolyn Dittmer, have two young sons. This family business relationship can proceed for at least another generation.

Liberty's present businesses include appliance, hardware, grocery stores, barber and beauty shops, garages, the bank, newspaper and a coin laundry. Dress making and general repair services are still offered by local entrepreneurs.

One of the more thriving businesses in Liberty today is also one of the most recent in origin. This is

the Liberty Feed Mill, where livestock feed is ground and mixed for commercial use.

This feed was once handled by the general store. As marketing became more specialized, small stores which handled feed prepared by large manufacturers handled this for the farmer. Some farm equipment dealers sold livestock feed as a complimentary line.

In the late 1950's Earl and John Kroencke, brothers and successful local farmers, decided there was a need for specialization in the livestock feed production.

They built a mill on South Street, got a franchise to handle Ralston Purina products and set out to serve the farmer to his specifications. Their decision has proved prudent.

CHAPTER 10

CIVIC DEVELOPMENT

--- Roads ---

At Liberty's beginning a trail made the site of the village advantageous to the merchants locating here. As Adams County became settled with more villages, trails were cut between these settlements. A main trail became a road leading to Quincy and the Mississippi River. The road between Liberty and Quincy was called the White Star Trail.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the railroads were criss-crossing the country, Liberty hoped that one might go through the village. In 1892 meetings were held between the villagers and the railroad people. Since Liberty was not on a direct route, the railroad offered to run trains to the village if the people would construct the tract. This seemed unreasonable to the thrifty villagers; thus they were never connected to a railroad line.

As long as the horse was the power for transportation, the trails between towns seemed adequate. However, once the automobile was recognized as the permanent method for conveying people and merchandise, many of the existing roads were found lacking.

THIS IS LIBERTY

In 1913 Dr. W. E. Mercer of Liberty's Commercial Club attended a Road Meeting in Springfield. He was the only representative from western Illinois.

The Liberty to Quincy White Star Trail or State Street Road, as it came to be called, was the first road selected to be improved under the Tice Road Law.

Having missed the railroad, Liberty was most conscious of having good roads in and out of the village. L. S. Boyer of Liberty was County Road Superintendent for many years.

By 1926 there was talk of a state highway going from Springfield to Quincy. Liberty felt that this road must not by-pass the village. Good road meetings were held in various towns and Liberty was always represented. Then the final road was laid out - Route 105 was to run down the main street of the village. Later the number was changed to State Road 104.

The rural roads into Liberty have been kept in fair condition. The need for roads passable to school buses and farm trucks has kept the issue ever before the public. In the late 1950's a wide black-top road replaced the narrow trail connecting Liberty to her neighbor, Richfield. This link made a trip from Liberty to Hannibal much easier by using the black-topped farm roads from Liberty to Richfield, to Payson to Fall Creek, thence to Hannibal.

CHAPTER 10

--- Fire Department ---

As more passable roads were constructed in the area, the feasibility of a fire department to serve the village and the rural homesteads became a reality.

The village had a couple of manually operated pieces of fire fighting equipment. This had to be pulled to the site of the fire; thus was of use in the village but could not serve the nearby farms. Delbert Linnemeyer and Harold Hofmeister were the two early fire chiefs for the village.

Fire has ever been the terror of the farmer who alone cannot cope with the blaze, the wind and the tinder-like buildings of most farmsteads. In the late 1940's there was hope that in the Liberty area there would be some fire protection.

An election was held on March 23, 1948, for the formation of a Liberty Fire Protection District. The district included all of Liberty township and portions of Gilmer, Columbus, McGee, Richfield, Beverly and Burton townships.

Alva Lierle, Ed Tenhouse and Walter Hofmeister were the first directors of Liberty Fire District. Roy Linnemeyer was the first Fire Chief and he served in this capacity for ten years. The firemen are volunteers who leave their activities and hasten to the conflagration.

A building to house the fire equipment became a need that was met in 1952. A fire house was built on Park Street just off Columbus where the fire engines and other equipment are kept in readiness.

For the past few years Delbert Lierle has been Fire Chief for the district.

--- Liberty Park ---

From the time Liberty was settled until 1960, it was under the governing body of the township structure. In other words, the town was treated as a rural area. In the early days this was, perhaps, advantageous. The streets were maintained under the provisions for the rural areas, the police protection was on a county basis, and the school was set up on a community basis.

The village fathers were very likely using expediency when they did not incorporate the village. It is found that Liberty Park's existence was brought about by the village's unincorporated status.

Lawless and Enlow agreed to sell the Park site for $800.00 and donated $150.00 towards the establishment of a park area. Money was raised by solicitations and the ground purchased circa 1913.

Since Liberty was unincorporated, advantage was taken of the State Park Law. The site was made into a township park, governed by three commissioners and supported by taxation.

Trees, shrubbery and flowers were gradually planted to improve the appearance of the area. William Keller, an early commissioner, worked hard and many of the present trees were planted by him. The Liberty Garden Club in later years has used beautification of the park as part of their yearly projects.

The chain around the park was put there primarily as a hitching rack and to keep roving stock from grazing in the park. The granite boulder near the Hannibal Street entrance into the park is a glacial stone found on the Henry Clark farm. He donated it to the park.

A band stand was erected around 1920. During the depression of the 1930's, a roof was added to the structure as a W. P.A. project. Some landscaping was also done by that group.

In 1958 the Lions Club and other Liberty organizations built a shelter in the park. Workmen installed a large cement slab with a roof so that activities need not be affected by inclement weather.

--- Incorporation ---

From time to time the question of Liberty's incorporation was strong enough for a vote, but lethergy set in and the election was never held.

The advantages of incorporation became more

apparent each year. Streamline automobiles did not propel well on the rutted, muddy gravel streets of the town. The township was not in a position to alleviate this situation. Modern plumbing called for more adequate source of water to each homeowner. Unincorporated areas were unable to get any state or federal aid for the fulfillment of this need.

The street lighting system was rather hodge podge since the lights were paid on a subscription basis and the lights were placed near the subscribers. The incorporated village could negotiate with the power company to establish a rate to be paid by the village, thus enabling the extension of illumination to the dimly lit corners of town.

As an incorporated area the village would be abe to get a share of the money from the state gasoline tax and to levy a small sales tax. These monies would provide a means for town improvements.

As the 1950's were drawing to a close the state of Illinois was making provisions for the incorporations of suburban areas in the state. A clause in the law prohibited the incorporation of areas with a population of less than 500 inhabitants.

Since Liberty had a static population which had changed little since its origin, it was well under the 500 residents. The law, however, did not take effect

until January 1, 1960. The decision on incorporation could no longer be shelved until a later date.

Forward looking residents felt that incorporation could help the village catch up with modern progress. Meetings were held and the Liberty Bee encouraged residents to vote for incorporation. The only opposition came from those whose interests were centered on personal monetary concerns. The old tax question was raised and exploited.

The election was held on November 17, 1959, and the villagers voted to incorporate Liberty. The following April the first village officers were elected. W. N. Hartsifeld was president of the Village Board; Wilford Clair was Village Clerk; board members were Elmer Pracht, Howard Buskirk, C. A. Gamble, Joseph Carl and William Kill. Mrs. Wilford Clair was appointed Village Treasurer.

In 1963 Emmet Lierle is Village President; Earl Kroencke is Village Clerk and Horace Hipkins is Village Treasurer.

--- Telephone ---

The first telephone in Liberty was a homemade affair that T. X. Frey, Sr., had between his house and his store before 1888. He could communicate between the two places with two funnels and an ordinary 1/16th inch wire running from his business to his home.

THIS IS LIBERTY

A group of farmsteads, north of Liberty, were connected by a telephone system owned by the Grubb Brothers around 1900.

As the need for this means of communication became generally accepted, more groups organized as a telephone line. Liberty being the hub of activity, it naturally became the center of the telephone lines. Dr. W. F. Snider was instrumental in organizing the Liberty telephone exchange.

Herman Kill, who managed the Exchange from 1916-1919, was also one of the original builders.

Thiswas a hand crank, magneto operated instrument. A central operator answered the ring and connected the lines. This central operator was a very important link in the process of oral communication. When lines were loose or connections faulty, she was able to make connections between the caller and the person called because she knew the whereabouts of her patrons. She frequently functioned as a modern answering service.

This telephone service, with the addition of a long distance switch connection with Bell Telephone in Quincy, served Liberty until 1963. At this time the original Liberty Farmer's Telephone Exchange was sold to Bell Telephone Company. As this is written, a modern telephone system is being designed and built for the Liberty area.

Mrs. Ralph Hull, who in recent years served the patrons of the Liberty exchange as central operator, will long be remembered for her efforts to match antiquated equipment to jet age business and social telephoning.

--- Electricity ---

As electricity became the power for night lights, Liberty decided to advance with the times. The Liberty Electric Company was formed about 1919.

A building was built and a 15 horsepower engine was installed to power the electric plant. The houses of Liberty were wired without meters; a flat rate was charged each householder in the village. Engineers for the company were George Browning, William Robbins and Walter Wilkey.

The plant on Hannibal Street furnished electricity to the homes and businesses from 4 p.m. until 11 p.m. each day except on special occasions. The consumer agreed not to use electric devices that required more than three and one half amperes.

The electric iron presented special problems to the user as well as to the power company. Certain hours were set aside for the housewife to do her ironing --- Tuesday and Wednesday morning from 7:30 until 11:30 a.m. and on Friday afternoon from 1 until 4 p.m. This must have upset a few household schedules until the lady of the house became accustomed to ironing by the clock.

This electric system served the village until Central Illinois Public Utilities began to furnish power for the village. The rural area adjacent to the village received electric power from the Rural Electrification system with headquarters at Camp Point.

--- Water ---

A third public utility has recently been voted into existence for the town of Liberty. Until 1963 the problem of water was of concern to each individual homeowner. Wells and cisterns provided each dwelling with the necessary water. When these sources ran dry or became low in supply due to the lack of natural origin, water had to be hauled from springs or the city of Quincy.

In the spring of 1963, after much discussion on the subject, an election was held and the resident voters passed the bill to provide for a village water system.

It is, at the present time, under construction. Two wells have been drilled, one at the fire station on Park and Columbus Streets and the second at the south end of the Park.

--- Crime in Liberty ---

Liberty, like other small villages, has had her share of petty crimes and perhaps some major ones as

well. Nonetheless, the only two we shall mention both centered around the Farmer's Bank of Liberty.

The first, which occurred on March 20, 1920, was the murder of Steven G. Lawless, leading citizen of Liberty, by William Elliott, a descendent of a Burton township pioneer family.

On March 20 of that year there was a Klarner sale in the village. The Klarner Implement Company held these sales periodically; this was advertised as a Grand Spring Opening Auction Sale. Farm machinery was to be sold with factory representatives present to demonstrate and explain the operation of the equipment. The ladies of the Lutheran Church prepared and served a lunch.

Steven G. Lawless was cashier of the sale, as was his custom. He was cashier of the Farmer's Bank of Liberty at the time. William (Red) Elliott, without warning, walked up to Lawless and fired three shots. One lodged in his abdomen and caused his death a week later.

The only explanation printed of the shooting suggested Mr. Elliott, a thirty-year-old farmer of Burton Township, was mentally ill and had delusions concerning Mr. Lawless's part in local wartime affairs.

Steven Lawless was selected by the state governor as Clerk of Adams County Exemption Board during World

Grand Spring Opering

AUCTION SALE!

OF

NEW FARM MACHINERY

LIBERTY, ILL.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 1920

Beginning at 10 o'clock A. M. Sharp

This sale will consist of New and Up-to-date Farm Machinery as follows: John Deere Gang and Sulky Plows, Riding and Walking Cultivators, John Deere Manure Spreaders, Dain 8-ft. Hay Loaders, Collins Rididg and Walking Cultivators, 12-inch and 13-inch Walking Plows, 10-ft. and 12-ft. peg tooth Harrows, International, Osborne and Deering Disc Harrows, Deering Mowers and Sulky Hay Rakes, Riding Cultivators, Garden Cultivators, Van Brunt Disc Drills, Deere-Hayes 4-wheel, I. H. C. and Peters' Corn Planters, 8-ft. Culti-Packers, 12-ft. Can't Sag and Iron Frame Gates, Hog Oilers, New Tread 3¼x10 Knapheide Farm Wagon, Cut-under Harper and Rubber Tire Buggies.

WE WILL SELL A NEW CHEVROLET CAR AT AUCTION ON THIS DAY

We Will Sell in This Sale 40 Rods Each 32-6, 39-6 and 32-6 of Our Celebrated Lion Fencing

Representatives From the Different Factories Will Be Present on ThatDay to Demonstrate and Explain the Various Machines to You

TERMS WILL BE MADE KNOWN ON DAY OF SALE

Lunch Will Be Served by the Ladies' Aid Society of the Lutheran Church

The Klarner Implement Co.

COLS. DEETER, LAWLESS and HENDRICKS, Auctioneers — S. G. LAWLESS, Clerk

Klarner Sale Bill, March 1920

War I. The first 100 men from Adams County to leave for military service were inducted into that service from the Farmer's Bank of Liberty building.

Mr. Lawless's funeral was attended by nearly 1,000 mourners from all over the county. He was sorely missed in Liberty; his foresight and progressive determination had carried the village through the horse and buggy days into the Roaring '20's.

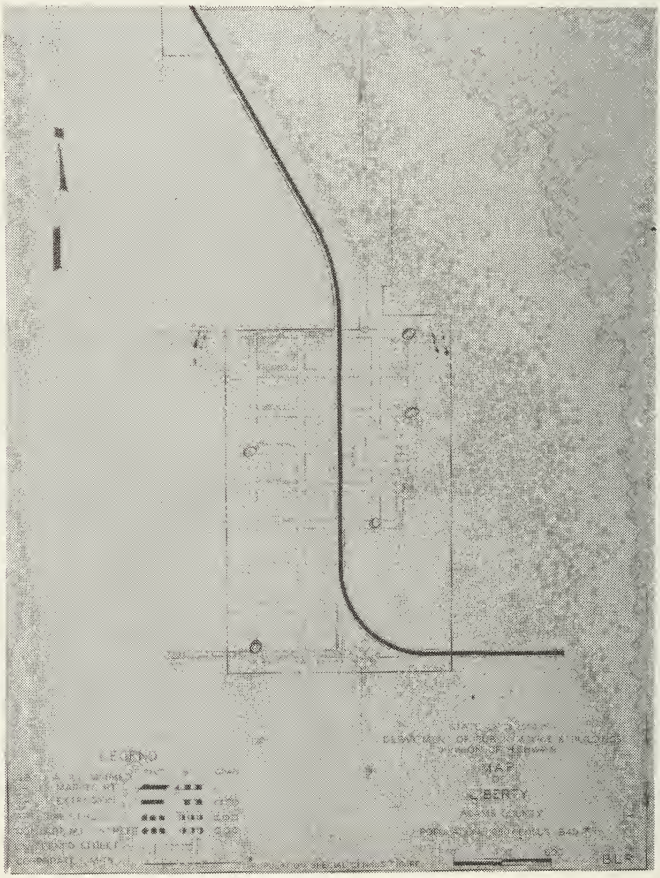
The second, less brutal, crime was a bank robbery committed on June 8, 1953. Earl Sims was cashier of the Farmer's Bank at that time with C. A. Gamble as assistant cashier and Miss Imogene Ormond, teller.

During the noon hour while Mr. Sims and Miss Ormond were out to lunch, leaving Mr. Gamble alone in the bank, an unknown masked man entered. The bandit was carrying a flour sack which he ordered Mr. Gamble to fill with money. Mr. Gamble complied with the request made at gun point and placed $6,208.00 into the bag.

Before the thief could escape, Miss Ormond returned and Mr. Fred Frey, a customer, also came into the bank lobby. The masked man ordered all three, Mr. Gamble, Miss Ormond and Mr. Frey, into the conference room behind the lobby where they were to lie down on the floor. The thief then escaped in a green car and no trace was ever found of him or the money.

The total amount was covered by insurance so that the misfortune was probably harder on the nerves of those involved than it was on the bank's finances.

Both of these crimes are still topics for conversation in Liberty today.



POSTSCRIPT

I have attempted to trace the history of the village of Liberty from its first settler, Daniel Lisle, to the present day.

In the process I learned much about the sturdy ancestors who lived in Liberty in days gone by. Some of this knowledge was inconsequential, but none the less interesting. I learned, for instance, that Ladd Grubb had the first high wheeler bicycle and that C. H. Mercer and Harry Collins were the first to ride safety bicycles in Liberty. I know that an airplane flew over Liberty during World War I and dropped Liberty Bond pamphlets. The first all-modern house in the village was completed in 1917 and had not only a bath but also steam heat. It was built by Dr. W. E. Mercer on the corner of Main and Quincy Streets.

I hope I have not omitted any pertinent detail of Liberty's history. Undoubtedly each reader will recall an incident that should have been included. I'm sorry that it wasn't, but time became an enemy to be reckoned with and the final book had to be printed.

This endeavor, however unworthy, could not have been done at all without the tremendous help of many Liberty people. Miss Freda Mercer gave generously

of her family treasures; Mrs. Delbert Linnemeyer was equally generous with both time and materials.

Each of you who loaned me your books, your pictures, your memories and your time, I wish to say a sincere -- Thank You.

Some things have been consciously omitted. The race track that Shaw Buttz had on the northwest edge of town was mentioned many times. However I could never find anything tangible to describe the track or the races held there.

Also a branch of the Klu Klux Klan has been whispered about, but these murmurs have been too brief and too uncertain to include.

I have enjoyed the task of setting down something of Liberty's past for the interest of Liberty's present and perhaps for Liberty's future.

As Thomas Paine said of an earlier period of crisis in our country: "These are times that try men's souls." Whether these souls dwell in the urbanite or the villager, the trying is no less painful. Each must look to his salvation. In Liberty, as all over the country, fallout shelters have been built by those who felt that this might aid in his and his family's salvation. The men of God in Liberty, as in the entire world, are searching, if not for

answers, at least for spiritual aid for their parishioners. Only the stability of national leaders here and abroad will tell whether more history is in store for Liberty, Illinois, or whether this little bit of Americana will disappear in the total destruction by nuclear warfare.

Merle Hartsfield

November 2, 1963
Orlando, Florida

Shaw Buttz Home. The race track was located near here.

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